

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4802

September 23, 2004

The Honorable John McLaughlin
Acting Director of Central Intelligence
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, D.C. 20505

Dear Mr. Director:

Earlier this month the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence received a copy of the recent National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) on Iraq. We found this intelligence estimate to be a thorough, thoughtful and frank assessment of the challenges we face in bringing stability to Iraq.

The assessment places the current turmoil in an historical context and projects the likeliest scenarios for the next eighteen months. This kind of strategic analysis not only informs policymakers, but also can play a critical role as the Congress grapples with the difficult issues surrounding America's involvement in Iraq. To facilitate that role, we believe that the substance of this assessment should be made public in some fashion as soon as possible.

We understand that much of the NIE is classified and sensitive. We believe, however, that an unclassified version can and should be prepared. Senior Administration officials already have discussed and characterized the NIE publicly. Any public discussion of such an important intelligence assessment should be balanced, and informed to the greatest extent possible by the document itself.

We have known for some time that the challenges facing us in Iraq are enormous. As we search for the right course, this analysis, while pessimistic, gives us a much needed framework for our discussions. The importance of this issue for our country's security demands that the public debate be built on a foundation of facts. An unclassified version of this assessment will significantly improve the quality of that debate.

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We request that an unclassified version of this document be provided to the Congress by October 1, 2004. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

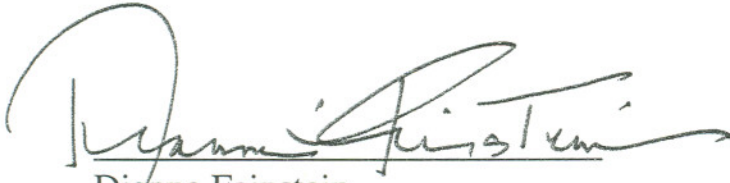
Sincerely,



John D. Rockefeller IV



Carl Levin




Dianne Feinstein



Ron Wyden



Richard J. Durbin



Evan Bayh



John Edwards



Barbara A. Mikulski